

**Approved**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on February 1, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Bello, Hurley, Latina, Martino, Rell, Spinella, Deputy Mayor Barry and Mayor Montinieri. Councilor Hemmann was absent.

Also present: Keith Rafaniello, Board of Education; Mike Turner, Town Engineer; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

All stood for the pledge of allegiance to the flag which was led by Councilor Rell.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Hearings** - NONE

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue commented a police report dated May 21, 2009 that stop signs should not be used for speed control or in a manner that minimize the number of vehicles having to stop. The decision should be based on engineering study and judgement. He would like an explanation of why it is against the law to install a stop sign on Morrison Avenue. He has asked before but has not heard the answer he wants.

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road commented on an article in the Hartford Courant about regionalization of services. Wethersfield does have a little regionalization going on but we really need to do it in-house. He stated they have been using this word "shared services" and have seen very little. We have the Finance Departments that we could consolidate the Board of Education onto the Town side; purchasing; information systems, that has been worked on and we even have building facilities and our grounds. We need to find some ways of cutting costs. We continue to ignore the problems especially at the State Capitol where the deficit has grown to 72 million and they are projecting another 550 million into next year. As you go into the budget process, he would like them to take into account that we can't live beyond our means and we need sense at the ground level.

John Miller of 45 Highland Street and business at 1137 Silas Deane Highway wanted to make sure that the Town is looking at and hopefully solving a problem which has invaded the area of Silas Deane and Mills Street. There is a rat infested and in a couple of memos he saw from the town, it implied that a home on Mill Street may be somewhat responsible for it. He thinks the homes on Mill Street are all victims and not responsible for the problem. We may be paying now for economic development success in town with a severe problem in that area. Something needs to be done to treat the overall area. The town needs to jump in and do something. It is serious and he suggests that the Town treat the area as the problem and not the individual homeowners.

**Council Reports**

Councilor Rell attended the Brainard Airport Noise Advisory Committee along with Town Manager Bridges. Living in Old Wethersfield he has heard of the planes flying overhead and found the meeting very informative. This last quarter there were only 24 noise complaints most of them came from residents of Wethersfield. This is down so the airport authority was happy about that. There was an editorial in the paper after Mayor Bronin was elected and he discussed the possibility for Brainard Airport expanding to a larger role. Some of the people from the public had concerns that would have an impact on more and

larger planes coming in affecting the people living in Wethersfield and that would not be the case. The footprint of Brainard is too small so they don't believe it will grow any larger. They want to get more young people involved in aeronautics. There are some programs, either curricular programs or work study and summer internships. He thought it might be something Kathy Bagley could do with the Parks and Recreation Department to get the kids involved.

He also attended the Historical Society and their finances and revenues were down this year, but their expenses were also down so there was not quite a net zero but it wasn't that bad of a year for them. They did thank the Town Council for approving the windows at Old Academy. The windows kept the drafts down and with the mild winter, energy costs were down and they were very appreciative of that. They had an incident where someone fell in front of the Francis House on Hartford Avenue on one of the toe trips on the sidewalk. Town Manager Bridges sent Bob Kelleher our sidewalk inspector there and look at it and marked it up. The Historical Society will take steps and cautions to make sure that doesn't happen again. The boiler at Lucky Lou's may need to be replaced and he thought it might be good for the town to have our staff and maybe town attorney to talk to someone at the Historical Society to see exactly who is responsible to work on that.

Councilor Martino stated last week was the first meeting of the Capital Improvement Advisory Commission. The Mayor was there and gave them their direction and standpoint of funding. They were told to keep it at the same level it was last year. They reviewed projects brought forward under the category of drainage, preventive maintenance for sidewalks, town buildings and community development. This week we will be reviewing fire safety, Parks and rec and Board of Education will be on the agenda next week and then the Committee will begin going through them all and whittle down the projects. The total of all projects that came in well in excess of 2-3 million dollars and then the Committee has to cut them down to the amount that is in the budget that they can spend which is under 1 million. So they have to go out there and prioritize and figure out what needs to be done and they do a real good job of it.

The Senior Citizen Advisory Commission met and they are planning their May event open house which the theme is "Keep it Simple". They are asking vendors to come in that are soliciting seniors now, things like solar panel and electrical supplies and asking them to have some brochures there that are simple and easy for the seniors to understand and not complicate things. They are also reviewing with the Churches in town on what they are doing to help meet some of the needs of the seniors.

Public Works Infrastructure Committee met and we received a presentation from CCM for the town purchasing street lights. They have previously gone out for RFQ and have three vendors to vent through and are planning another meeting with the three vendors to get their input. If the town does decide to go on and buy the street lights they will all be converted to LED and as a result our electric costs will go down dramatically and we will see savings. They also reviewed a sidewalk snow and ice clearing ordinance and the Committee had some questions they wanted answered by the insurance agent. Those answers will be ready for us at the next meeting.

Councilor Bello stated she met with the Library Board and the Town Manager gave a budget process overview. The Friends of the Library discussed their successful book drive and are planning another one for April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Library Board has a RFQ out for architectural services and they also discussed the installation of security cameras there. She also attended a Pension Committee meeting and they had quarterly updates from Prudential and FIA and there was discussion on individual pension requests. She also attended the Board of Education Saturday Budget Workshop and it was interesting to hear the Principals and employees presenting their new initiatives to the Board.

## Council Comments

Councilor Hurley commented that at the last meeting he had inquired about a Weight Watcher's update.

Mayor Montinieri responded that they met with three arms of the finance piece of the project here at town hall and have essentially crafted a financial profile for the buyer that accommodates the bridge from construction to permanent and then the final revision over to a permanent financing for the operating and that looks to be finally in place in terms of a proposal. The piece that has to be finalized is the construction bid and they are meeting with a contractor at the site on Wednesday to finalize the contracting price which will allow him to plug that into the financial proposal. The seller has been kept in the loop through the process. So the timeline looks to be about 30 to 45 days to have the construction bids finished and submitted and then the due diligence which is another 60 days through the financing arm he is using. So hopefully it will be April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Councilor Hurley asked that after shared services meets, he would like an update on combining the IT departments. He also suggested that we should have somebody from town go down and check on the rat problem.

Deputy Mayor Barry stated that he agreed that the issue with the rats need to be addressed and should be taken seriously.

Councilor Bello thanked Councilor Hurley and Committee for the St. Patrick's Day fundraiser on January 23 which was sold out in honor of two wonderful Wethersfield women, Barbara Bellas and ~~Norann~~ Noranne Wamester and hopes the Town Council will get the opportunity to officially honor them at a date in March.

Councilor Rell stated that the Wethersfield Chambers is having a fundraiser for the fireworks on February 12<sup>th</sup>. \$25.00 per person at the Community Center and BYO pretty much everything.

Mayor Montinieri announced that the Heirloom Market which was purchased by Julia and Spiro has opened at the Old Comstock. It is essentially a mini whole foods and coffee shop and also a market. They have made a major investment and did an amazing job and have acquired the entire property for the market and they are getting a good response but he wanted to push to make the community aware of the energy and commitment they have made to revitalized that.

## Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Bridges stated that at the Community Center they are redoing a wing with a new floor. The asbestos abatement went perfect and the new floor is being installed. Next year CIP will replace the floor in stages. There was a lot of communication with the customers in the building so not to inconvenience them. We did reach out to the Health Department with regard to the rats. The Inspectors did go out to look at the sites and there were some signs of rats and they have taken those actions by notify individual property owners, recommending extermination procedures for those properties that do seem impacted and notification to the rest of the areas on what they can do to prevent further infestation. He will reach out to them and find out what has been effective or more steps need to be taken to resolve the issue. We have reached out to shared services and are in the process of negotiating the inner local

agreement that's been sent to the Board. On the town side we are making adjustments in conjunction with our Technology Union on how that staffing person works out. So the negotiations are under way between the Board and the town and the town and the Union and expect something within the next month on both fronts.

Mayor Montinieri inquired if there was anything that has been identified with review by the town Health Department with regard to the rat problem that has precipitated it, any changes in the composition of any of the buildings or usages or any failures on the part of any businesses.

Town Manager Bridges commented that they haven't gotten into the causality. We have just got into status and how they address it with the property owners. He can get into causality but he doesn't know if they know but he could find out.

Mayor Montinieri stated that he imagined that causality leads to a solution. But he was wondering that normally the commercial businesses particularly the restaurants that are generating food have contractual coverages in place and whether something has lapsed somewhere.

Town Manager Bridges indicated that they have not received any complaints in the Property Maintenance Department regarding unemptied dumpsters or dumpsters not being emptied or any complaints about higher or lower amounts of odors in the neighborhood. It's just an issue we have to tackle and make sure we get a result.

Town Clerk Communications - NONE

### COUNCIL ACTION

#### Ordinances, Resolutions, Appointments for Action

Councilor Spinella moved to **“ACCEPT THE APPOINTMENT OF RYAN BERASI TO THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD”**, seconded by Councilor Bello.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### Unfinished Business – NONE

#### Bids

Town Manager Bridges stated that this is our annual fleet replacement schedule. We buy four new vehicles a year for the police department and those are cycled through the department over the next five to six years. We are buying two of the SUV versions of the new police interceptor and two of the sedan version of the new interceptor. Ford has stopped making the Crown Victoria so we are in the process of replacing this fleet as they come off line. This was anticipated in the budget process and provided for in the CNEF fund.

Councilor Bello moved to **“PURCHASE THE FOUR POLICE VEHICLES AS REQUESTED AND DISPOSE OF BY SALVAGE OR AUCTION THE FOUR IDENTIFIED POLICE VEHICLES”**, seconded by Councilor Spinella.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Barry moved to **“ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE AND AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF THE COMPUTERS AS REQUESTED”**, seconded by Councilor Martino.

Keith Rafaniello explained that the technology budget that is part of this overall project comprises of about 2% of the overall budget which is allowing us to have a tremendous impact on teaching and learning. We were asked to go slow in spending this budget and we have. The construction is 75% complete and we have spent approximately 50% of the technology budget. A section of floor 2 has come online and on it we have three computer labs. Right now these rooms are utilizing laptops which we purchased earlier in the project and the idea was this was temporary and then once the labs got their computers, the laptops would go back to the Library for the entire school to use. So getting these 90 computers fills these labs for many electives, business courses and many general purposes. At the elementary school level we have about and 80% student to computer device ratio and at the middle school we are 100% student to computer. At the high school we are at 30% and that is by design because we knew this project would afford us an opportunity to provide devices for our students and allows us to get newer and more affordable technology. After this purchase there will still be about \$800,000 left in the budget, but we also have to forecast for computer replacement in the future and for additional equipment to connect to online resources. Most importantly he would like to provide a chrome book for every student with this part of this project. What is nice about this is that going through the project instead of our operating budget, the state is reimbursing us 40% on the technology we purchase through the project.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

#### Other Business

Ordinances, Resolutions, Appointments for Introduction - NONE

#### Minutes

Councilor Martino moved **“TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 19, 2016 with the change to reflect on Page 2 that he was asking for just a one page of information from the Board of Education on payroll”**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 7-0-1.

#### Public Comments

Gus Colantonio of 16 Morrison Avenue commented a few years ago he had a question about the signage on his street. He had someone ask him why are the signs on the other side of the sidewalk and not between the curb and sidewalk. He has been looking all over Wethersfield and so far he has not found them except only on his street. Someday he will get an answer.

Robert Young of 20 Coppermill Road stated that he had a rough week as he approached February 1<sup>st</sup> and had to pay his tax bill. Our taxes are so high because we are not just supporting ourselves we are taking on all the responsibilities for others such as the Historic Society and the \$43,000 we lose from Lucky Lou rental and we still have to pay for whatever happens their boiler. He has to keep cutting back his costs and thinks people just don't know how to reign in their costs and wished they would learn how to.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:07 p.m., Councilor Martino moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Barry.

**Vote:** All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council  
February 16, 2016